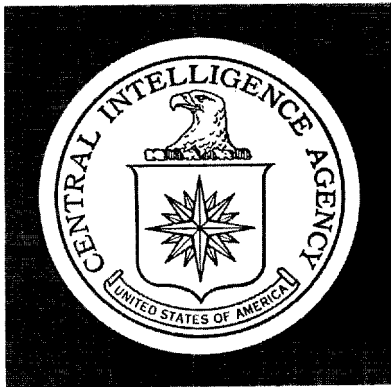


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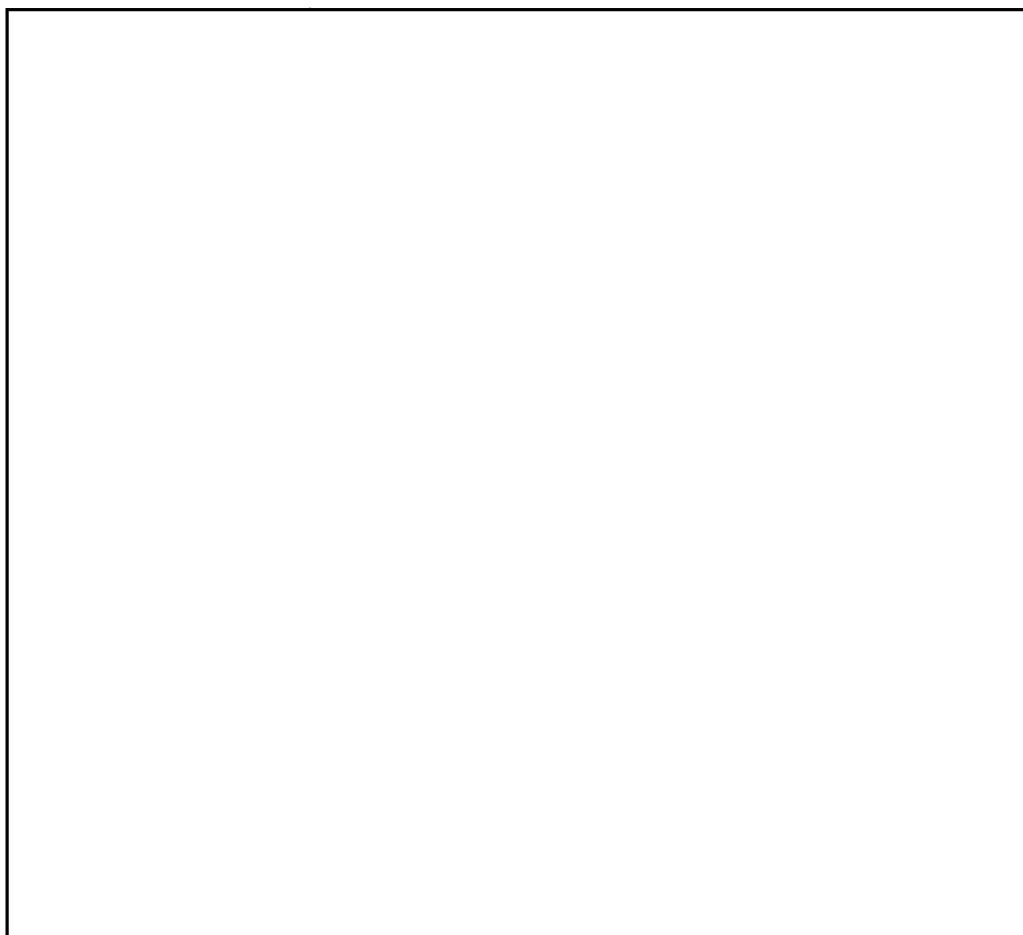
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Malta: [The government of Malta reports that the Soviets have asked the Maltese for permission to make a "fleet visit" to Malta. There is no indication yet of a response from Malta, which may feel it must give serious consideration to the request if it is given wide publicity. The UK-Malta defense agreement requires British consent before Maltese facilities can be opened to a non-NATO navy. This development may prompt NATO to give more urgent attention to plans to improve its relationship to Malta.]

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Eastern Europe: Prospects for a good agricultural year have dimmed in all the East European countries except Czechoslovakia. The situation is most serious in the southern countries, where extended drought and frosts in April have affected winter grain and other crops. Unless the drought is soon broken, most of these countries would be forced into the international grain market. This would create further strain in their balance of payments with Western Europe, already in deficit.

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